



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INTERIOR CLOSES RAILROAD VALLEY, NEVADA, WILDLIFE LANDS TO OIL LEASING

Notice of intent to close 7,240 acres of wildlife lands in the Railroad Valley Migratory Bird Refuge, Nye County, Nevada, to oil and gas development will be carried in the Federal Register in the near future, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Decision on the closure by Secretary Fred A. Seaton followed an agreement by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Nevada State Fish and Game Department that the areas included in the 7,240 acres are lands valuable for migratory waterfowl or could be so developed.

The remainder of the 133,397 acres could be opened to gas and oil development, with proper safeguards under the regulations, the three agencies agreed. The classification procedure was in accordance with regulations issued January 8, 1958, by Secretary Seaton.

The Railroad Valley refuge was set aside by Executive Order in 1934. In 1950, in accordance with the terms of the Wildlife Coordination Act, the State of Nevada assumed responsibilities for the management of the refuge, developing several areas for waterfowl purposes.

Director Dan Janzen said, in connection with the action: "The lands of the refuge have only minor value for wildlife conservation purposes, this being limited to scattered water and marsh areas that are of value for the protection of migratory waterfowl. The areas proposed to be specified as not available for oil and gas leasing comprise all of the water and marsh areas of significance which would thus be protected by the proposed classification. The remaining lands are arid desert which have no significant value for wildlife management purposes."

A 30-day period for comment or objection is allowed after which final action will be taken.

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